

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1844
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY LAPAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 4265

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS PFOR BR
SUBJECT: BRAZIL PROMOTES AN AMAZON PACT

REF: BRASILIA 4219

1. SUMMARY. IN TESTIMONY BEFORE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MAY 17 FOREIGN MINISTER CONFIRMED THAT BRAZIL HAD SENT LETTERS
TO AMAZON BASIN COUNTRIES SUGGESTING AN AMAZON PACT. VENEZUELA
EMERGED AS ONLY COUNTRY NOT TO HAVE RESPONDED TO EFFORT.
SPECIAL ASST. TO FOREIGN MINISTER HAS INDICATED TO US THAT A SECOND
COMMUNICATION WILL SHORTLY BE SENT SUGGESTING FRAMEWORK FOR AGREE-
MENT, WHICH WILL BE SIMILAR TO PLATE BASIN TREATY, STRESSING
TECHNICAL COOPERATION. END SUMMARY.

2. ESTADO SAID THAT IN TESTIMONY BEFORE CLOSED SESSION OF SENATE
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FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE MAY 17 (REFTTEL) FOREIGN MINISTER CON-
FIRMED THAT BRAZIL HAD DISPATCHED LETTERS TO EQUADOR, PERU,
GUYANA, SRINAM, COLOMBIA, BOLIVIA AND VENESUELA SUGGESING AN
AMAZON PACT. ACCORDING TO THE MINISTER ONLY VENEZUELA HAD DELAYED
IN RESPONDING TO SUGGESTION, AND SILVEIRA PASSED OFF RELUCTANCE OF
VENEZUELA AS UNIMPORTANT SINCE ONLY SMALL PART OF VENEZUELA WAS IN
AMAZON BASIN. HE ADDED PROJECT WOULD BE DEVELOPED WITHOUT VENEZUELAN

PARTICIPATION IF NECESSARY. RATIONALE, MINISTER ALLEGEDLY SAID, WAS NOT ONLY TO SHOW BRAZIL'S AND OTHERS' INTEREST IN PRESERVING THE AMAZON BASIN FOR THE FUTURE, BUT ALSO TO OFFSET OUTSIDE EFFORTS TO INTERNATIONALIZE AMAZON BASIN.

3. IDEA OF PACT HAS ANTECEDENTS IN NOV 1976 MEETING BETWEEN GEISEL AND MORALES-BERMUDEZ. THE BRAZILIAN PROPOSAL WAS OFFICIALLY FLOATED IN FEBRUARY 1977 AND CONFIRMED BY ITAMARATY'S SPOKESMAN IN APRIL WHO CALLED PACT AN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INTEGRATION EFFORT. SPOKESMAN REFUSED, HOWEVER, TO CONFIRM OR DENY REPORTS THAT THE PACT WOULD BE PATTERNED AFTER THE PLATE BASIN TREATY. REPORTS OF THE PACT LED TO CRITICISM OF SILVEIRA'S FOREIGN POLICY BY SENATOR LUIZ VIANA FILHO, WHO SAID PACT COULD NOT BE NEGOTIATED WITHOUT BROAD NATIONAL CONSENSUS OVER POSSIBLE RISK BRAZIL WOULD LOSE SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE AMAZON. VIANA FILHO'S CRITICISM STIMULATED APPEARANCE BY FOREIGN MINISTER BEFORE SENATE COMMITTEE MAY 17, AND TESTIMONY ON BROAD RANGE OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS (REFTEL). SENATOR VIANA DECLINED TO ATTEND SILVEIRA SESSION AND RENEWED CRITICISM ON MAY 24, STATING THAT IF AMAZON PACT WERE MODELED AFTER PLATE BASIN TREATY IT WOULD EQUALLY BE A "HEADACHE" FOR BRAZIL.

4. DURING LATE APRIL VISIT TO PERU, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE BRAZILIAN ARMY GENERAL FRITZ AZEVEDO MANSO STRESSED THAT PERU AND BRAZIL IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD EXPLOIT AMAZON TO THE BENEFIT OF THEIR PEOPLE. FRITZ ADDED THIS WAS THE OBJECTIVE OF GEISEL, WHO HAD EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE FOR COOPERATION BY NATIONS OF THE AMAZON ARE A.

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5. IN MOST TELLING REACTION FROM DIPLOMATS HERE FROM POTENTIAL PACT MEMBER STATES, GUYANESE DIPLOMAT TOLD EMBOFF THAT PROPOSAL WAS A MEANINGLESS GESTURE BY THE BRAZILIANS. HE SAW NO ECONOMIC REASON FOR THE KIND OF DEVELOPMENT IMPLIED AT THIS JUNCTURE BY SUCH A PACT AND SAID AGREEMENT WOULD FALL OF ITS OWN WIGHT, BECAUSE PROJECTS

WOULD END UP BUILDING "ROADS TO NOWHERE." SINCE BRAZILIANS CONTROLLED THE WHO BASIN ANYWAY, IT DID NOT REALLY MATTER WHAT KIND OF AGREEMENT WAS FINALLY WRITTEN, HE ADDED. BOLIVIAN DIPLOMAT SEEMED HOPEFUL PACT MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPMENT OF REMOTE NORTHEASTERN REGIONS.

6. SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO FOREIGN MINISTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS, JOSE NOGUEIRA FILHO TOLD EMBASSY OFICER MAY 23 THAT BRAZIL WAS PLANNING SHORTLY TO DISPATCH A SECOND LETTER TO EACH OF THE BASIN COUNTRIES SUGGESTING A TREATY FRAME-WORK FOR THE PACT. NOGUEIRA INDICATED PACT MIGHT BE SIMILAR TO PLATE BASIN TREATY AND WOULD ENCOMPASS TECHNICAL COOPERATION SUCH AS INCLUDED IN BILATERAL AGREEMENTS SIGNED BETWEEN PERU AND BRAZIL LAST NOVEMBER (76 BRASILIA 9416). THERE WOULD BE NO POLITICAL INTEGRATIVE MEASURES, HOWEVER,

CONTAINED IN PACT. NOGUEIRA SAW NO REASON WHY VENEZUELA WOULD NOT EVENTUALLY PARTICIPATE IN AGREEMENT.

7. COMMENT. AT THIS JUNCTURE IT IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE THE INTENT AND LIKELY ULTIMATE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PACT, WHICH IS STILL LITTLE MORE THAN A GLEAM IN SILVEIRA'S EYE. PACT'S PRINCIPLE IS CERTAINLY CONSISTENT WITH BRAZILIAN POLICY OF BUILDING CLOSE TIES WITH SMALLER NEIGHBORS THROUGH JOINT COOPERATIVE EFFORTS AND GIVES GREATER NORTHERN EXPOSURE TO ADD BALANCE TO WHAT HAS LONG BEEN BRAZIL'S HEAVY FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION TO THE SOUTH. AT THIS POINT, PROSPECTS FOR PACT BECOMING A MORE SERIOUS COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT ENDEAVOR ARE HARDLY BRIGHTER THAN FOR THE PLATE BASIN PACT, IN VIEW OF THE CONTINUING SUSPICIONS OF BRAZIL'S AMAZON NEIGHBORS AND THE LACK OF RESOURCES FOR JOINT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. SOME DOUBTS EXIST EVEN WITHIN ITAMARATY THAT PACT, WHICH SENIOR ITAMARATY DEPARTMENT HEAD PRIVATELY LABELED A "GHOST," WILL BE MORE THAN MERE WIDOW DRESSING. SENATOR VIANA'S CRITICISMS
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OF PACT REPORTEDLY REFLECT CONCERNS IN SOME MILITARY CIRCLES THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY MAY BE MOVING TOO HASTILY TO INVOLVE NEIGHBORING STATES IN AMAZON, RISKING ULTIMATE IMPAIRMENT OF BRAZILIAN SOVEREIGNTY. COUNTER ARGUMENT TO THIS NOW DEEVELOPING IN ITAMARATY IS THAT PACK WILL HELP PRESERVE BRAZILIAN SOVEREIGNTY SINCE IT WILL HELP BLUNT INCREASING PRESSURES BY THE INTERNATIONAL ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITY OR OTHER FOREIGN INTERESTS TO "INTERFERE" IN THE AMAZON AREA WITH A VIEW TO REGULATING OR PRESERVING THE BASIN'S RESOURCES OR ENVIRONMENT.
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Message Attributes

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